



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

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Dear Members of the Aviation Community:



We have all struggled with many challenges since September 11, from the loss of life to economic damage to urgently putting in place new procedures and technologies. And while it's true that we need to view our projects and priorities through the prism of September 11, it's also true that we cannot lose our focus. We must stay the course and build an aviation system for the twenty-first century.

Our modernization plans will move ahead full throttle. Traffic will rebound. Demand will come back. Aviation is simply too important – too integral to our economy – to the fabric of our society – to our quality of life. It would be the height of irresponsibility for us to think or plan otherwise. Just as we have moved forward on an integrated strategy for security improvements on multiple levels since September 11, we must continue to move forward on coordinated efforts to modernize the National Airspace System (NAS).

The Operational Evolution Plan (OEP) is our framework for the capacity and efficiency improvements needed for modernization. This executive summary highlights OEP progress since June, including the new Operational Evolution staff and the launch of the OEP web site, <http://www.faa.gov/programs/oep>. At the terminal level, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will continue to focus on key airports that currently limit the capacity of the NAS. New runways, new routes, new tools and airspace redesign make up the core changes. In the en route domain, the FAA is finishing sector expansion and other airspace changes to relieve choke points, while moving forward on airspace redesign, reduced vertical separation and free flight tools. The FAA strategy for expanding capacity when forecasts call for adverse weather is a combination of improved capabilities at airports, improved management of airspace during severe weather and new tools to improve forecasting.

This updated OEP includes modifications based on new security requirements and temporarily reduced passenger demand. Our best estimate is that economic conditions and passenger demand will recover within 18 to 24 months. As we all agreed earlier this year, the OEP is a "living document" that uses an evolutionary, one-step-at-a-time approach to modernization with collaboration by the entire aviation community. The events of September 11 have impacted some timelines but not our blueprint for change.

Charles Lindbergh saw aviation as part of the continuum of human endeavor. We continue to work together from that shared vision for aviation and its enormous potential for fostering economic growth and enriching our lives both personally and professionally.

Thank you for your continued support, active participation and dedication to aviation.

Jane F. Garvey
Administrator